

THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

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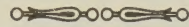
THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

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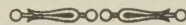
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Kant's Epistemology

GERARD SMITH

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KANT'S critique of pure reason is based upon one assumption, namely, that what is not given form in experience comes wholly from the mind. For example, in the universal judgment, *sugar is sweet*, it is perfectly obvious that the meaning of this proposition runs our experience. All that we experience, or can experience, is that *this sugar is sweet*, or, *all the sugar I have tasted is sweet*; but never can we experience that *all sugar is sweet*. That truth is not and cannot be given wholly in experience. Yet we mean the proposition to cover all possible cases. It must be, therefore, that we have added to our experience something extraneous to it, and this—since experience cannot be its source, Kant admits, can innate ideas—must come from the mind.

Two words express this ideogenesis: *synthetic*, which indicates that knowledge is put together of experience plus an element outstripping experience; *a priori*, which indicates the element in knowledge which lies beyond experience, that is, a power in us of putting together things which have not experienced together. Synthetic, then, describes the "put together" characteristic of certain kinds of knowledge; knowledge which is taken apart from, analyzed, drawn out of elements already apprehended synthetically. *A priori* describes the overhand grips of the mind upon reality, overhand grips upon something not contained in the actual grip of experience. Synthetic indicates the addition which knowledge makes to ex-

perience; *a priori* indicates the source of the added element, the unifying function of the mind. Consequently, those propositions are synthetic in which the predicate adds something to a subject not originally containing the added element; and, since the addition is not from experience, it must be based on the synthesizing power of the mind, a power which, prior to experience, is waiting to pounce upon and unify, put together, whatever experience leaves disjointed.

This is the whole of Kant's critical philosophy reduced to its simplest elements. The simplification may seem excessive, and indeed, if Kantian richness of thought be our aim, it is. But any development of his thought would only evolve one or other of the ideas already explained.

As we remarked, Kant's explanation of knowledge is based wholly on the assumption that whatever cannot be found in experience, for instance, the truth, *sugar is sweet*, must come wholly from the mind. He assumes the identity of two possible meanings of *a priori*. *A priori* may mean: a) what is not given in experience; b) what comes solely from the mind. Adverting to the fact that much of our knowledge is *a priori* in sense a, Kant concludes that it is also *a priori* in sense b. By reason of this identification of the two meanings of *a priori*, Kantian philosophy is produced much as a conjurer would extract a rabbit from a hat. The rabbit, to pursue the figure, may be *a priori* in sense a—truly, our experience missed the rabbit—but was it *a priori* in sense b? Or was it there all the time?

Every comparison is halt. It is better to bring the discussion around sharp by speaking, not in figures, but of things. And first of all, it is of *things* we must speak. There should be no quarrel over Kantian terminology. If Kant chooses to call synthetic what is usually called analytic, that is his business. He has the right to use any terminology he chooses, nor may anyone protest because Kantian terminology differs from his own. Secondly, the judgments which Kant calls synthetic *a priori* may be conceded to be *a priori* in sense *a*. Many would protest—wrongly, I think—to this lumping of what *they* call analytic judgments under the head of synthetic *a priori* judgments. But Kant's reason for doing this is, I think, valid enough: such judgments, for example, $7+5=12$, are not given formally in experience. Anyhow, the discussion is about those judgments which everyone will admit are synthetic, as, bodies are heavy. These, I have said, we may concede to be *a priori* in sense *a*. This concession is not wrung by Kant from an unwilling philosophy. By pointing out that the mind outruns sense Kant is simply having his fling at empiricism. So did Socrates have his, and Plato his, and Aristotle and St. Thomas theirs, and so must any man who is once alive to the insanity of all Heraclitean philosophies. To Heraclitus' πάντα περὶ the answer of any man who is so much as self-conscious must be: τὰ μὲν περὶ, τὰ δ' οὐ. Self-consciousness, at least, is planted firmly on the banks of the river of reality.

Thirdly, the whole question of the validity of Kantian philosophy resolves itself into this: Is *a priori*, sense *a*, identical with *a priori*, sense *b*? Synonymous expressions of the same question are: Is the disjunction between empiricism, which, to explain knowledge, asks everything from sense, and an idealism which, to accomplish the same task, asks nothing from sense, complete? Is the failure of experience alone to account for ideas a proof that ideas alone account for experience? If our knowledge outstrips our experience, is it therefore running on ahead of experience, blindfolded? Granted that mind is more stuffed with reality than is sense, is the mind's content just stuff and, perhaps, nonsense, or good cloth, all wool and a yard wide? In short, if I do not get all my knowledge from experience alone, is it from myself alone that I get that element of knowledge which transcends experience?

It must be admitted that if these are the only alternatives to explain knowledge—experience alone, or mind alone—Kant's answer to the question is probably as satisfactory as one as can be given. Why he failed to see another way out is a most interesting historical problem, though perhaps it will never be solved. Had he never heard of Aristotle, or of St. Thomas, or of the controversy over universals which convulsed the Middle Ages? Apparently not. This seems to be the most satisfying hypothesis. Kant was too keen a thinker to have made the unappreciative blunder of rejecting *en connaissance de cause* the Aristotelian-Thomistic synthesis. And one scarcely likes to

think that Kant disdained the explanation of universal knowledge offered by the Angelic Doctor. Really the man would thus be convicted of the humility of a Texas bob-cat; and it is difficult to think this of the studiously kindly philosopher of Königsberg.

However, faced with either empiricism, or idealism, Kant chose the only solution he saw: knowledge does outrun sense; still, it is not wholly innate in our non-intuitive minds; it is rooted in reality; we see the direction of its spire, though its peak is lost to us in the clouds.

As to Kant's initial assumption, it is not verified. He did not even attempt to verify it. His transcendental deduction cannot be valid, to say the least, unless the disjunction between pure empiricism and pure idealism is complete. Never having shown this, never, apparently, having known of any other possibilities than empiricism or idealism, Kant is always subject to the threat against all philosophers who build upon disjunctions, the specter of a *tertium quid*.

For, between the explanation of knowledge which reduces it all to sense, and the explanation which reduces it all, or at least all its supra-sensible elements, to mind, between Heraclitus and Parmenides, Plato and the Sophists, between Locke, or Hume, and Descartes or Leibnitz, there lies the middle course long since pointed out by Aristotle and followed to its limit by Thomas Aquinas.

Aristotle, keenly aware of the problem of the one and the many—the problem in question here—solved it in the field of epistemology—whither all philosophies must come for guidance, and whence all issue forth to conquer reality—by applying to it his theory of potency and act.¹

From change it is clear that, first, something can be what it is not, and that, secondly, something achieve what is not, but can be. That which is not, but can be is potency; what gives to potency that which it can be but is not, is act. Potency is the non-being of act; act is the being of potency. The two, potency and act, are distinct, otherwise being would be non-being, which is contradictory.

Applying this to matter: in anything divisible we must have these two distinct, though inseparable and, in themselves, indivisible elements, potency and act. For, in divisible things there is multipliability—since the divisible can be divided; yet this multipliability is unified—since the divisible is not divided. But by their union the two principles of multipliability and unity complete each other and make the one divisible thing. The two principles are called matter and form.

Form, being pure unity, is negatively immaterial, that is, it does not make any difference *what* potency it is which form unifies. Hence, form can exist naturally in matter "intentionally" in us. Existing intentionally in us, form is called an idea, and it is *by* this idea that we know. To know, then, is to become the thing known. We are, by

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First Principles

THE Western World today finds itself in a crisis that does not seem to be a passing phase in its onward development. Panics and periods of depression we have had in the past, and we have recovered; but this is no mere economic and no mere industrial pause. On every side we hear voices that proclaim the West finally and irretrievably bankrupt. This is evident not alone in finance and commerce but in every activity that has been incorporated in the progress of the last several centuries. There have been, indeed, movements in those centuries productive of much beauty and good, as the Romantic movement and the factual growth of science; but these have been incidental to the central development of the times. That development, excluding sentimentalism in religion and art and literature, greed and utter self-service in business, liberalism and idealism in thought, has worked itself out, through its last phase of naturalism, to complete impoverishment. The mark of our times and the principle of our modern synthesis, if we may speak a paradox, is disunion and independence. That disunion has come at last to the separation that is death, and we face, helplessly, a chaos.

We look about us for an understanding of our position and a remedy. To understand it we have far to seek, for, the shattered bridge can be traced to a subtle error in the fine lines of the blue prints, so the tremendous crash of our so solid civilization can be traced to the subtle mistakes of philosophers. To be sure, there were a hundred co-operating causes, from the greed and pride of man

to the intoxication of machine production; but in it all, making impossible the mind's control, was the vitiating presence of a false first principle. That first principle was not the assertion of a pregnant idea that could stand at the head of an ordered *weltanschauung* but the dark denial of "things" and of mind itself and, therefore, of order and control. All modern philosophy has been paralyzed by the problem of knowledge, and the dark question of Pilate, "What is truth?" remains for it unanswered.

Now, it is precisely a lack of order and control, in public and private life, in thought and in affairs, that lies at the bottom of our present difficulties. And a lack of order and control is inevitable when this primeval doubt paralyzes thought, life and love. For men can neither live by nor die for things that are in doubt. The martyr cannot face the rack if deep within himself he suspects his faith is a lie; the philosopher cannot solve the master problems of human thought with that certainty and confidence which alone will enable him to order thought and to direct conduct, unless he has a basic trust in his own philosophy. That confidence can arise only from *Realism*.

Therefore, beneath all the solutions of economists and all the activities of relief and cooperation, beneath all our intellectual and artistic efforts, there must be posited, as a firm foundation, a philosophy of "things," a metaphysics that is an intellectual analysis of reality. We have had inflation not only of credit and currency, but of language, literature and thought; all these must now be sternly tested by the value of "things." And to establish the value of "things" we must reaffirm the native power of the mind to seize the real. For more than a century philosophers have approached the problem by attempting to throw some bridge across the chasm between mind and reality; that is, they have *assumed* beforehand the *existence* of such a chasm, and this, despite the contradiction of every spontaneous movement of the mind. For the seizure of the real is co-temporal with the activity of the mind. There never was a separation, there cannot be; hence, we need not construct some mysterious arc. Thought and thing are bound in nature and bear witness to one another.

If we accept such a realistic first principle—the first principle of strong-minded thinkers like Aristotle and Aquinas which they amply vindicate in their works—we will be able to build again a consistent explanation of the world; for our test of unity and genuinity will always be the objective *thing*, and it, too, will be the source of knowledge, the data of all science. And so, linking thought to thought with strong logic till every value is re-established and every relation understood, we will erect again a *scientia reatrix*, a "queen science," through whose superior power the mind will ever be able to control all new conquests of learning and to inform every intellectual activity. Order in the mind will then beget, in some measure, control in action, and so will be re-established a culture, informed by intelligence and directed by principle, instead of a chaos of pseudo-science and jungle ethics.

KANT'S EPISTEMOLOGY (Cont.)

knowledge, both ourselves and something else, namely, the object known, not indeed that object in the ontological order (*in rerum natura*), but the object known according to its form or idea, natural in things, "intentional" in us.

How, then, resolve the antinomy of sense and mind in the *a priori* synthetic judgments of Kant? How is it that the object we know is one object when actuating matter, but multiple, that is, applicable to many, when actuating us? How is it that, whereas my experience is always of *this* man, nevertheless, my knowledge is of something, *man*, applicable to John, George, James, and so forth, *ad infinitum*? The reason is this: matter, the principle of multiplicity, limits the form existing naturally in it to *this* individual, chokes off the form from its capacity of being *many* individuals. If any given form did not actuate matter there would be no reason why there should be many things like that form; there would be just that one thing of that kind. This is to say that though there are many men, there are not many ways of being a man. Either you are a man, or you are not. But since matter does multiply, individualize, therefore, the form *man* is, in the ontological order, *this* or *that* man, not just *man*. Yet, because it is freed from matter in the concept, form is precisely just *man*, not *this* or *that* man, but *man* as such. Once more, when form exists as actuating matter, the matter "licks" it to the limits of being *this* thing, and once "licked" to this individual limitation, form remains so, until it rise, in the knowledge a mind has of it, to regain its lordship over the vast domain of any being like it.

It is thus, then, that Aristotle resolves the problem of the one and the many in universal judgments. *Sugar is sweet* is a judgment applicable to any sugar, and I need not have experienced all possible sugar in order that my knowledge be true of any sugar. For I have stripped this sugar of what made it *this*, and now possess a form, sugar, which with all its properties (no need here to kick up metaphysical dust about sweetness being a property of sugar; if it is not, something is) can be found identically the same in any sugar. A common notion does indeed outstrip experience—in experience I possess only this experience—but in the assimilative process of knowing, the *this* is spat out and the essence (*quod quid est*) alone is taken in. Once having seized upon what a thing is, then, since what a thing is cannot be what a thing is not, the mind can validly apply the concept representing what-a-thing-is to all realizations of it. These are *other* realizations only because the principle of multiplicity, matter, makes them other; whereas they are the same in their only directly intelligible element, their form.

Once this explanation of the union of mind with sense to form objects of experience is admitted, the only hurdle left to surmount in the field of epistemology is the problem

of the one and the many relative to objects of thought. That is, Aristotle satisfactorily explains why such judgments only as *sugar is sweet*, *Socrates is a man*, *men are mortal*, are validly universal. (They are such, let us recall, because, though not in experience, nevertheless the express that which, the form, experience has laid hold on and stripped of all that made it contingent and particular; that which, thus stripped, is identical with itself in whatsoever multiplying potency it may be found.) However, there is another problem. It will be noticed that all these judgments have to do with objects which in some shape or other we experience, in the sense that we, as it were, bump into them. Now, there is much knowledge whose objects we do not bump into, for instance, God, the soul. What about these objects, the objects not of experience but of thought? If we get form from matter, whence comes the form which has nothing to do with matter? If by experience I bump into objects, and thus become the living image of what they are, of their essence, able to apply the content of this image to other objects of experience, what guarantee have I that my knowledge of objects transcending experience, of objects I cannot bump into, is not purely subjective? For Kant there is no such guarantee. He admits, indeed, that we cannot help thinking these transcendent objects; he assigns to the thought of them a pragmatic, problematic value of truth; he concedes that such objects regulate our thought, fix the direction which thought must take; but whether or not those objects be set over against thought, whether they measure thought instead of being measured by it, that we cannot know.

The reason for the validity of transcendent objects of thought is given so swiftly by Aristotle³ and St. Thomas⁴ that the completeness and profundity of their answer might escape the casual reader. In brief it amounts to this: If thought be purely subjective, then one man's thought is just as true as another's, that is, there is no such thing as truth or error. That this must be so, on the supposition of the purely subjective origin of thought, is apparent, because the purely subjective is just as *truly* subjective in one man as in another. If George thinks that something is so, and the sole reason for his being right is that he thinks he is right, then John, who thinks that the same thing is not so, is just as right as George. John surely has the same reason for being right that George had: John *thinks* he is right. Now, to admit that the only difference between truth and error is subjective, not objective, destroys the very possibility of thought itself; for, if what George affirms to be, is not (or, if what John denies to be, is), then we must, if we are to think at all, think that George and John are both wrong. And here, at least, is something objectively true: George and John are both wrong. The reason for the falsity of both their thoughts cannot be subjective, for the supposition was that both were subjectively true. The difference between

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The Philosophy of Irving Babbitt

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IT is not too much to say that in Irving Babbitt, who died in July of this year, we have lost one of the most distinguished of our literary critics—one who possessed a prodigious learning, a refined taste, and a delicate power of discrimination into the service of the classical tradition for nearly forty years, a philosopher who possessed a penetrating mind and a rare degree of sanity. If we must take exception to many of the fundamental assumptions of his philosophy, we must none the less be grateful to him for the courageous polemic he waged during his life against the men who had the cry in literature and thought. If at times he seems to have been too taken up with their errors to admire their merits, with his general conclusions and his fine historical analysis we cannot disagree.

Mr. Babbitt's philosophy has been fairly well formulated in the six books and the thirty or forty occasional essays he has published since 1897. His work falls into three main divisions: literary criticism, a positive statement of his own theories, which we will take up shortly, and a negative attack on many important tendencies in modern thought. With the first we have no concern here. The second deserves some brief mention both for the importance of the subject to Mr. Babbitt and its intrinsic value as historical philosophy. His researches had convinced him that the whole of modern thought falls into two main categories, sentimental emotionalism and scientific naturalism, the one stemming back to Shaftesbury and Rousseau, and the other to Bacon.¹ The first betrays a general trend to mysticism of the sensory type found chiefly in the literary man, and is an outgrowth of Shaftesbury's sentimental ethics and Rousseau's theory of natural goodness with its function in the brotherhood of man, pity and sympathy. This emotional unrestraint is very closely paralleled by the Baconian tradition with its emphasis on enlightened self-interest. Both are expansive, both put responsibility not on the individual but on society.

Mr. Babbitt endeavored to meet this expansive emotionalism and consequent rejection of standards, both literary and ethical, by a bold criticism and a fairly definite system of his own that endeavored to put responsibility back on the shoulders of the individual. He believed that, in view of the naturalist's cult of freedom, the first step should be an assertion of the existence in man of some controlling or inhibiting power capable of governing the instincts and emotions. No doubt he had never been without a conviction of the freedom of the will, but in his later works he put it forth with the experimental proof that has found much favor in recent times. For him it was "one of the immediate data of consciousness, a conception so primordial that, compared with it, the denial

of man's moral freedom by the determinist is only a metaphysical dream."² Indeed, there is no element of determinism to be found in his writings. Nor is the will conceived in Kantian terms which make man's freedom cognizable not in his acts but mediately, through the cognition of a moral law that supposes freedom. It represented for him one element of the dualism he perceived in man between the lower and the higher will, that is, between the instinctive appetites and the reasoned choice. That dualism became the corner stone of his philosophy, and the distinction did yeoman service for him all through the long polemic he waged with the sentimental naturalists and such writers as Bergson, Croce and Spingarn. Among the faculties of the soul the will holds the primacy of power and dignity, and if we wished to label him in the manner of the text books we should call him distinctly a voluntarist. A man's character, he held, depended entirely upon the proper cultivation of the will, and this inner activity is his chief work in life. Consequently, man's dignity is determined to the degree in which he exercises that will, and this not so much by direct activity as by a government and restraint of the appetites, whether they tend to pleasure or to power. From this premise he reasons "that the good life is not primarily something to be *known* but something to be *willed*."³

It is this view that has caused his philosophy to be regarded as negative. It is true that his sustained emphasis upon what he called "the will to refrain" has colored all his work. He believed that man's freedom is more evident in what he refrains from doing than in what he does. His deep reading in Buddhistic and Confucian philosophy in his later years tended to confirm him in this general attitude.⁴ Buddhistic philosophy especially influenced him and gave a final definiteness to his thought on the matter. He was more deeply impressed by the abundant evidence both in literature and life of the rebellious character of the natural man than, perhaps, by any other quality in the human complex. The great need of the age, he felt, was a spirit rather of concentration than of expansion. Consequently, his chief emphasis is upon repressive measures against the appetites, a setting of bounds to the emotions and a directive influence upon the imagination that will turn it from absorbing contemplation of the Many to the One. It would be incorrect, however, to consider his philosophy as purely negative in character. His point might better be stated as the duty man owes himself to control his appetites.

We may note here, in connection with his treatment of the subject, that Mr. Babbitt uses the term "higher will" indiscriminately at times to signify both man's will and God's will, though its meaning is usually clear from the

context. His conception of the Christian theory of the will seems to have been that the Christian achieves nothing whatever by his own efforts, but depends entirely on the sudden workings of grace to control the lower appetites; in the past he thought, the higher will had been identified too often with God's will. He distinguishes between Augustinian and Aristotelian psychology on this ground, that the former depends on sudden visitations of grace and the latter attains the good life through the formation of right habits. Mr. Babbitt's concept of the will one might term Puritan rather than Christian. His representative Christians, from a study of whom he reaches this conclusion, are Augustine and Pascal. Certainly Pascal was not a representative Catholic, and of Augustine it can hardly be said that he depended entirely upon grace to effect a change of any kind in life. He believed, of course, in the necessity of a divine *concursus*. This is very far, however, from denying all initiative to the human will.⁵

Intimately linked with Mr. Babbitt's treatment of the will is his theory of cognition. It is a synthesis of Aristotelian and idealistic elements which he derived from the French philosopher Joseph Joubert (1754-1824). In Joubert's system, as far as it is formulated in his *Pensées* and his letters, the imagination is the great unifying faculty which extracts a measure of unity and universal truth from the welter of accidental change. For him, illusion was an integral part of reality and only by imaginative intuition can we hope to achieve some knowledge of things as they are.⁶ This theory Mr. Babbitt adopted and gave a peculiar twist of his own. The imagination is a vagrant thing that needs to be disciplined to some center of unity; and this disciplining is to be effected by the domination of the will, holding the imagination constant to some system of standards. Life baffles the mere rationalist. Its reality is indissolubly blended with its illusion, and any attempt to separate the unity from the diversity leads either to a metaphysic of the One or of the Many.⁷ Only an imaginative apprehension of phenomena can give us an approximation of the universal that we may safely use.

We may conclude from this that there is here no imperative necessity to cognize things as they are; truth may correspond to our conceptions, but of this we have no guarantee. Mr. Babbitt does not posit a physical inability to go to the essence of things. In this he differs from Kant. He differs, too, from Plato in his conception of the mode of cognition. Undoubtedly, Joubert's work decided him to take this essentially idealistic position. Other influences must also have affected him—early studies in the Kantian and Hegelian philosophers, and perhaps the desire for a system of aesthetics that would settle the difficult question of the imagination's function.

Mr. Babbitt needed for his ethics some system of standards in accord with which a man might guide his life; and, having cast off the traditional standards supplied by religion, he was forced to go back into human experience to determine what is normal and representative of human

nature. These new standards of the humanist are to be formulated by the imagination intuiting the truth, and in its inquiry the imagination is to be preserved from error by the analytical intellect, sifting and criticizing the universals presented to it. But the function of the intellect is at most supplementary and subordinate to that of the imagination and will.⁸ To give it the place of primacy is to fall into the rationalization of the pseudo-classic critics, and ultimately into a form of intellectual pride which Mr. Babbitt sees as destructive of standards. Indeed, to seek an analytic and rational explanation of life, or of any truth, is to attempt to pour the ocean into a cup. We need formulae; but we cannot consider them absolutes. They are merely handy guides for attaining an approximation of unity.

We might call Mr. Babbitt an anti-intellectualist, if we remember that many of the functions an intellectualist would assign to reason he gives over to the imagination. He was led to this position in a very curious way. He saw that humility was at the foundation of Christian ethics and that an equivalent virtue was required of the true Buddhist. Now, humility for the Christian is an acknowledgment of a being higher than himself, and Mr. Babbitt makes no allowance for such a being. But humility is distinctly opposed to intellectual pride, something he contemned, and he thought he could furnish the basis for a humanistic humility by subordinating the intellect to the will.⁹ The Babbittian primacy of will cannot be attributed wholly to this quest of humility, for in all his earlier writings the will is given domination over the less noble parts of man. After his studies had led him to the philosophies of the East, however, the intellect as well was put beneath its sway.

It would be well to pause at this juncture and review what we have already seen. Mr. Babbitt's theses are, of course, open to criticism, and his admirers could not be offended if we practice upon them some of that astringent criticism he himself so warmly recommended. Let us take, for example, his theory that illusion is inextricably mixed with reality. He asserts that the epistemological problem cannot be solved metaphysically and abstractly.¹⁰ The validity of sensory experience has, of course, been questioned from the time of Descartes and Locke. But Mr. Babbitt did not seem to realize that this is a question which is not open to half-way solutions. One may develop Locke's position inevitably through Berkeley to the sceptics, or he may rest in a dogmatic assertion similar to Kant's. Or, finally, he may with Aquinas stand firm in the conviction that he can attain to essential and absolute truth in the noumenal order, and can ascertain when the senses report phenomena accurately and when they do not. Constant experience assures us that we are correct in our judgments. But we must inevitably reduce our problem of knowledge to one of these three positions. A reality inextricably mingled with illusion is but a preliminary step to absolute idealism; and the fact that Mr. Babbitt did not go farther than he did may demonstrate

that he had his judgment in pretty thorough subordination to his will. Again, the domination of the intellect over the will, though necessary for a solution of Mr. Babbitt's problems, is hardly borne out by experience. We possess a directive power over our reasoning, but this very power of the will is itself preceded by cognition. Too great insistence on the distinction between them runs dangerously close to an hypostasis of the faculties.

We come now to a consideration of those ethical principles which the imagination has built up out of the experience of mankind. The aim of humanism is to bring the law of measure and of decorum into human conduct. To be a good humanist, we are told, is merely to be moderate and sensible and decent.¹¹ In this lies happiness, the realization of a life well spent, a happiness to be achieved not by outer activity but by the inner working of the soul upon itself in accordance with its standards. The standards themselves are norms of conduct which each one is to determine for himself, gauging them by what he knows of the experience of the past, taking as his models men who in common opinion have led lives distinguished by moderation and decorum. Such persons as Socrates, Confucius, Buddha and (as though of no higher order) Aristotle, are recommended as representatives of the highest perfection of humanism in the ages and countries in which they lived.¹² Much of a man's knowledge of the past, all, of course, be derived from his early studies, and because the spirit of humanism has flourished nowhere so much as in Platonic Athens and Augustan Rome, the literature of those two periods is to be taken very much as a gospel out of which sound principles of morality may be developed.

It is important to note that, though the humanist must have standards, he may not hold them rigidly, but must adapt them flexibly to the exigencies that arise at every turn of life. To reduce one's standards to formulae would be not merely to lose the spirit of the true humanist but to offend against that critical spirit which is the hallmark of the individualist. Indeed, the character of the standards forbids any strict formulation. As we have seen, they are derived intuitively out of a reality from which illusion can never be wholly abstracted. In consequence, the perfection of a man's humanism lies in the degree of flexibility with which he applies his standards. Flexibility, Mr. Babbitt declares, is one of the characteristics which, together with hard, consecutive thinking, distinguishes the true Aristotelian and, we may infer, the true humanist.

It follows from this that Mr. Babbitt's system might be defined as one of flexible morality. In saying this we do not wish to cast a slur upon his name. His ideals, as we saw them, are above reproach. But it does follow that the standards a man chooses will be no higher than the exigencies of the moment allow. Good and bad become relative terms; and the case is not helped by stating them in superlatives. Mr. Babbitt, in his essay on the encyclopaedist's bicentennial, condemns the work of Diderot as sometimes flagrantly indecent; the offense, however, is not

against an absolute morality but against Aristotelian decorum. In *Democracy and Leadership* we find that the humanist would moderate, rather than deny entirely, the most imperious form of the *libido sentiendi*. And elsewhere we are told that "the real humanist consents, like Aristotle, to limit his desires only in so far as this limitation can be shown to make for his own happiness."¹³

Now of all this one must note that a man, in formulating these standards, though he has the criticism of the reason to aid him, is nevertheless working imaginatively upon a body of experience which can be equated only approximately to things as they are, and that, in consequence, his standards are in the last analysis subjective, returning us, though in a devious way, to Kant's position in his *Critique of Practical Reason*. In Mr. Babbitt's system we can have no ultimate criterion of the validity of our universals such as the Scholastic has. Certitude is, of course, impossible on these grounds. Unless we are able to make direct contact with the essences of beings outside ourselves and attain to the intelligibility of things, we can have no surety. Nor can there be in the system an absolute obligation to conform one's life to these standards. For, as Dr. Rudolph Bandas has pointed out, the ego cannot impose upon itself a law which it has itself consciously formulated, because a true law binds the will.¹⁴ We have not even a categorical imperative to guide our actions. Nor can we hope to establish a canon of humanists or of standards. It is on his own judgment that Mr. Babbitt excludes Machiavelli and Diderot and Rousseau and Taine from a central position, and, by his tenet of critical individualism, no other humanist is bound to accede to his opinion.

It is with this side of humanism that the Scholastic moralist chiefly differs and against this he must protest. Like many another man of innate good breeding who has attempted to establish an ethical system solely upon his own character, Mr. Babbitt has formulated a philosophy that is wholly unsuited for the average man, or even for the exceptional man over a long period of time. He went to the central core of human experience for his standards, and yet he must have seen that this same core (if we except those who were constant to a set of standards they believed had divine sanction, a set quite different from his own) contains much that is not moderate, sensible or decent, judged either by Christian morals or by humanism. Human experience is eloquent of the fact that it is difficult enough for a man to lead a decent and sensible life with the guidance of absolute standards, and even more eloquent that those who have led such a life without such standards are exceedingly rare. One is forced to suspect that they owe more to their background than to their self-formulated code. Why should we will a good life, if the only sanction to our failure will lie in a postulated decrease in our personal well-being, or in some slight effect our conduct may have on the course of civilization? A man would be exceedingly altruistic to will civilization when it conflicts with his immediate interests. Happiness, once an

absolute has been denied, is the most relative of concepts. On Mr. Babbitt's own premises one might define it with Rousseau as revery, quite as well as in terms of inner strenuousness, measure or decorum. It will be well to note that two distinguished members of the school, Mr. T. S. Eliot and Mr. More, have raised the same question and answered it in substantially the same way.¹⁵

With Mr. Babbitt's doctrine of *ne quid nimis* in human affairs the Scholastic does not quarrel; he rather welcomes it as another manifestation of his own tradition. The philosopher Aquinas speaks of the choice that must be made between particulars, how temperate conduct depends upon a nice adjustment between single actions and universal principles, and how knowledge of where truth lies amid a multitude of contingent actions is derived from experience.¹⁶ For him the *ne quid nimis* (he calls it "prudence") is the directive force of all the other virtues a man may practice, ordering them to their end. But he rejects the idea that either in these virtues, some of which, for example humility, play a large part in Mr. Babbitt's ethics, or in the practice of *ne quid nimis* itself lies the ultimate happiness of man. For, admitting that a man tends toward some good, the most perfect of a man's acts cannot be those by means of which he picks his way between non-essentials (the true function of *ne quid nimis*), but rather those that bring him directly to his end.¹⁷ Aquinas placed that end in the contemplation and perfect possession of a Being who is goodness and intelligibility personified. Decorum as an end would hardly have satisfied him. Mr. Babbitt does not take cognizance of anything beyond the affairs of this life; and we shall not attempt to demonstrate such a reality here. To substantiate Aquinas' argument it is enough to point out that everything we know in nature tends to an end (with man it is happiness) and participates in an economy of ends such that all things tend to some good and from good to higher good. Once a man acknowledges a Being whose essence is *bonitas* he must recognize that it is toward that Being his will is drawn and in the possession of which alone he can be content.¹⁸

We might note here that *ne quid nimis* may be understood in many ways, and that the compass of its application is commensurate with the breadth of the reality a man acknowledges. As for any other man who sees in life the total experience of man, and in a good, well-rounded life the highest good attainable, so for Mr. Babbitt, the Christian viewpoint is at times as excessive as that of the Rousseauist.¹⁹ He did not realize that, once we have pushed the limits of life beyond death, the center of balance must shift radically, and that, given a higher goal than the perfecting of our human faculties, the *ne quid nimis* assumes a vastly different meaning.

If at times in this paper we seemed to deal too severely with Mr. Babbitt it is because we are here concerned with his basic assumptions. As he himself remarked, when writing of some of his contemporaries, there can be no compromise where first principles are involved. To that

extent, at least, he dealt in absolutes. While his presentation of the philosophy of criticism found in the *Poetics* is perhaps the soundest we have had since Lessing, his psychology and metaphysic can hardly be called Aristotelian. With all his wide reading, and he seems to have read everything of importance in ancient and modern times, the Middle Ages scarcely existed for him. Perhaps it was the old shibboleth, so long exploded, of theological domination that kept him from them. One cannot help feeling that this neglect did him no good, and certainly it did not help him forward in the apostolic mission he had undertaken. What this age requires most is not primarily a spirit of concentration but a return to ontological truth upon which a valid system of ethics and metaphysics may be based; but for Mr. Babbitt ontological truth is lost, like all else, in a haze of illusion. At all events, we salute him. He was a brave man, a deep thinker and a noble character; if he failed in much, there still remains a great deal more that he accomplished.

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GOD--A Critique of Kant's Objections

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(Author's note) This article is but an attempt, I hope not too unsuccessful, to apply to our particular subject the main ideas of Père J. Maréchal's philosophical reconstruction, as set forth in his "Cahier V: *Le Thomisme devant la philosophie critique*." Yet, I trust that the reader will be prudent enough not to infer from these notes any judgment on the work of Père Maréchal himself.

KANTIANISM as an integral system of philosophy may be a thing of the past; nevertheless, it survives in its main elements and can be found at the basis of most modern philosophical assumptions. Modern Agnosticism in particular is, to a great extent, but an outgrowth of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. How often are we not told that God is totally beyond the reach of human reason, that His existence can by no means be proved, and hence, that direct religious experience is the only possible rest in the matter? And when we ask for proofs, the authority of the philosopher of Königsberg is inevitably brought forth as a conclusive argument.

Now Kant can hardly be called an agnostic. He was a pious Lutheran. Yet God's existence was, for him, only the fundamental postulate of practical reason. Theoretical reason could give no definite help in the matter. This "theoretical agnosticism" we intend to examine briefly. We will first state Kant's argument as objectively as we can; then we will attempt to point out how Kant's objections against the Scholastic proofs for the existence of God might be refuted.

Only a very brief sketch of Kant's system is necessary to enable us to discover the value of the elements used in the arguments for the existence of God. Starting from the "object of consciousness," which he reduces to the minimum we cannot possibly doubt, that is, its necessity and certitude as the "object of thought," Kant proceeds by the method of transcendental reflection and deduction to determine the conditions necessary for its possibility. These conditions, provided they be really constitutive of the object of thought, necessarily partake in its necessity and certitude.

Hence, Kant establishes first the necessity of some immediate experience, some intuition as a starting point of all knowledge. But we have no other intuition than the intuition of the senses, based on sensitive receptivity. But pure receptivity would mean multiplicity, whereas "object of consciousness" necessarily means unity. Hence, a process of successive unification: first of the phenomenon as such, under the *a priori* forms of space and time, then of the phenomenal object under the categories of the understanding. But the phenomena can be subsumed under this higher unification of the categories only in so far as they are capable of a higher unification. This capability is expressed by the "schemes," the possible combinations of the forms of space and time. Hence, the categories,

though in themselves intrinsically independent of space and time, are nevertheless dependent on space and time in their application through the "schemes." It immediately follows, therefore, that any other use of the categories (the use of the categories without content or with any content other than empirical) will be illegitimate, and that the "object" thus formed will have no certitude.

The phenomenon, thus unified by the application of the categories, is finally constituted as "object" by the "transcendental apperception" which makes it participate in the "unity of consciousness" belonging to the "transcendental subject." (I will not explain these terms more fully as they are not required for the argument.)

Yet this is not all. We necessarily strive after a higher unification still; we not only form concepts, but group them, reason on them. These higher laws of unification, or laws of reasoning, are "the ideas of reason." These "ideas" are by no means concepts, for they lack the necessary determination. They are only indefinite possibilities of unification and systematization in a certain direction. As such they are extremely useful and have a real value, what Kant calls a "regulative value." But of necessity we tend to determine these undetermined forms. We subsume them under the categories and so "objectivate" these tendencies in the limit toward which they point; we thus form the pseudo-objects of Self (as ultimate substratum of attribution), the World (totality and ultimate substratum of the conditions of experience), God (totality and absolute limit of unity of all objects of thought). This use of the categories, being in no way constitutive of our necessary object of thought, is wholly illegitimate, and the pseudo-object thus acquired has no "objective value." It is a "transcendental illusion"; its value is only "problematical."

Higher still than the ideas of reason stands the "Transcendental Ideal," God again, not now as "limit" or "cause," but as perfectly determined, unique and transcendent, the "*omnitudo realitatis*," the "*Ens Realissimum*." Here we have really a "transcendental concept of God" as Kant calls it. But again, its value is only problematical; for, though it be completely determined, and thus more than a pseudo-concept, yet it is in no way constitutive of our object of knowledge, and thus in no way based on experience. Now these are the elements we shall have to use in any argument to prove the existence of God. One sees immediately that the conclusion of any such argument will partake of the weakness of the premises; it will be either purely phenomenal or purely problematical, and, therefore, in neither case will we reach God as necessarily existing. Let us see how Kant applies this to the traditional Scholastic arguments.¹

Kant first examines the ontological argument and discards it; then examining the cosmological argument he finds that it is finally based on the ontological, and so it undergoes the same fate; the "physico-theological"—what we call teleological—is found to be based, in turn, on the cosmological and with it on the ontological.² And there we are!

The ontological argument may be formulated as follows: What is necessarily existing exists; but God (*Ens Realissimum*) is necessarily existing (*Ens Necessarium*); therefore, God exists. If, in the major, by "necessarily existing" you mean necessary actual existence, you simply state a tautology, and you must take "necessarily existing" in the same sense in the minor. Then, in the minor, you identify *Ens Realissimum* with *Ens Necessarium*, as actually existing. Such a judgment is certainly not analytical, for you can never analyze actual existence from a concept; and, besides, all judgments of existence are synthetic. But in a synthetic judgment the predicate can be attributed to the subject only in the measure in which the subject is susceptible of it, that is, in the same plane of reality. But the *Ens Necessarium* is for me but my "Ideal of Reason." I know nothing of it in the plane of actual existence; hence, the most I can predicate of it is ideal existence. But from ideal existence I can never conclude to actual existence. If, on the other hand, one reasons: God is possible, therefore He exists, Kant answers that of God we know only the negative possibility as object of thought, that such a concept or idea does not appear to us as contradictory. To conclude from this to the positive possibility of existence is rather a big jump. Finally, it must be noted, moreover, that even the logical identity between *Ens Realissimum* and *Ens Necessarium* cannot be ascertained; for if there is identity, this judgment must be convertible. But how can we know that no other *Ens Necessarium*, or Necessary Being, can be conceived but the *Ens Realissimum*, the plenitude of Being? We cannot identify our Idea of Reason with our Ideal of Reason. Hence, it is clear that the ontological argument does not stand.

"In the cosmological argument," writes Kant, "are assembled so many sophistical propositions, that speculative reason seems to have exerted in it all her dialectical skill to produce a transcendental illusion of the most extreme character."³ We may put the argument "in form" and give the chief distinctions, which, according to Kant, bring us back finally to the ontological argument.

All empirical existence requires a Necessary Being, *Ens Necessarium*; but the *Ens Necessarium* is identical with the *Ens Realissimum*. Thus all empirical existence requires the *Ens Realissimum*, God.⁴ The protagonists of this argument boast that they start from experience and thus conclude in the plane of actual reality. But they forget to consider that, starting from the empirical, they should stay on the plane of the empirical. "All empirical exis-

tence requires an *Ens Necessarium*." The major is correct only if by *Ens Necessarium* you mean the ideal limit of unification, the third idea of reason in as far as it has a regulative value. But then it is by no means an "objective concept," and you cannot reason on it. But you do reason on it and take it as an "objective concept." The major, then, does not stand. Nor does the minor; for by identifying the *Ens Necessarium* with *Ens Realissimum* you again make the transition from the ideal, your pseudo-concept of *Ens Necessarium*, to the actual, the *Ens Realissimum* as fullness of Being in the line of actual existence. This was the chief flaw in the argumentation of the ontological argument.

Of the "physico-theological" or teleological argument Kant speaks with the greatest respect (p. 349); yet he considers it his duty to point out that, suasive though the argument may be, it certainly does not lead to apodictic certitude. From the order in nature we conclude to a certain finality, and from this to an Intelligent Cause which we identify with the *Ens Realissimum*. But how do you know the order in nature? By empirical knowledge. Then what meaning can "finality" have for you? An empirical meaning only, a necessary law of unification, which as such can enter in no argumentation. But let us suppose such a finality in nature. What, then, can you conclude from it? At most, the existence of a kind of "Supreme Architect," one who has put order and finality in nature. Now to conclude from a "Supreme Architect" to the "Supreme Cause," you must pass through an argument based on contingency, the cosmological argument. Then, there remains still the identification of *Ens Necessarium* with *Ens Realissimum*, which brings you back to the ontological argument.

Consequently, says Kant, the arguments advanced for the existence of God have no apodictic value, because 1) the materials employed, namely, the ideas of necessity, contingency, causality, finality, are, in the meaning in which they are here used, only categories, devoid of their empirical content; they have no "objective value"; and 2) all three of these arguments are finally based on the fundamental paralogism of the passage from the ideal order to the order of actual existence. To refute Kant's theoretical agnosticism, then, we will have to prove first that the materials used do have an objective value, and secondly, that the cosmological and teleological arguments do not imply the paralogism stated above.⁵

I will now point out how we can, against Kant and on Kant's own ground, rehabilitate the cosmological and teleological arguments—for there is evidently no question of saving the ontological argument. I have first to establish the *objective value* of the elements of the arguments, then, to show that *these arguments are not based on the ontological one*. In this exposition we accept Kant's method, transcendental reflection and deduction: All that is necessarily constitutive of our necessary

object of knowledge partakes in its certitude. We must prove, against Kant, that the necessary affirmation of God is constitutive of our object of knowledge.

The starting point is the "object of consciousness." But Kant arbitrarily limits the value of this object to that of "object of thought" (the phenomenal object as such), whereas it necessarily presents itself in our consciousness both as "object of thought" and "object of being." To take this starting point in its integrity would simplify our work immensely. Yet we accept Kant's conditions, and, starting from the phenomenal object as such, we intend to prove that the phenomenal itself forces us to go beyond the phenomenal.

Our object of consciousness necessarily presents itself as unified, limited, and "objectified." These are the data of transcendental reflection admitted by Kant. Now, if I prove that, in the constitution of our object of consciousness as unified, limited and objectified, there is implied the whole metaphysical order and even the existence of God, I will have proved the objective value of the elements of the arguments and the existence of God as well. The argument is a deduction in three steps.

First we conclude from the phenomenal object to a *dynamism* specified by the pure undetermined form of being. We prove, or rather, we briefly indicate how to prove, that these three aspects of the object, namely, unity, limitation, objectivation, imply such a dynamism as a condition for their possibility.

As regards the *unity* of the object, Kant admits that, in the unification of the phenomenon by the application of the category, there is *spontaneity*; but he refuses to investigate what this spontaneity may be. Now, if there is spontaneity—and there must be—it means at least this: that the subsumption of the phenomenon under the category does not follow from the mere presence of both, that the faculty at the back of the category moves itself (spontaneity!) to this subsumption. But this implies that the phenomenon presents itself as the possible perfection of this faculty, that this faculty subsumes the phenomenon for its own perfection, that is, for its own actuation. This means a *transitus de potentia ad actum*, a becoming in the line of being, a tendency toward being. This tendency must have a specification; but this specification can only be the *pure form of being*; that is, if it were in any way determined we would have either innate ideas or the intuition of God, both of which suppositions are excluded by the fact that we have no intellectual intuitions.

Again, with reference to the *limitation* of the object, an object can be known as limited only by being explicitly or implicitly opposed to the unlimited in the very act of being perceived. Explicit opposition would mean explicit perception of the unlimited. But I have no such explicit perception. Thus I know the object as limited by implicitly opposing it to the unlimited, by referring

it to the unlimited. This characterizes my knowing faculty as a tendency with an unlimited specification which, as we have just proved, can be nothing else but the pure form of being.

"Objectivation," even though it be only as "phenomenal object" or "object of thought," implies, besides its apperception as limited, an opposition between the knowing subject and the object known, as such. This opposition does not come from passive reception, for such reception is pure relativity; therefore, it comes from the active subsumption. But this opposition implies the constitution of the object of thought as identical with itself as object of thought; which constitution (or affirmation) of the object as identical with itself implies a reference to the Absolute. Thus my knowing faculty knows by referring to the Absolute; it is a tendency working under the specification of the Absolute. This specification can be nothing else but the pure form of being.⁷

Next, and this is the second step in our deduction, we reason from the dynamism of the intellect to the *implicit affirmation of God as Ideal*. This step in the argument hardly needs any elucidation. A faculty specified by the pure form of being and knowing its objects by referring them to the Infinite and the Absolute, can be nothing but a tendency toward being as infinite and absolute, that is, towards God. Since this tendency is constitutive of the object of consciousness, every act of knowledge—in other words, every affirmation—implies the affirmation of God as Ideal.

From this implicit affirmation of God as Ideal we proceed to the *implicit affirmation of God as existing*. This again would need no explanation were it not that Kant also comes to God as Ideal, yet maintains the impossibility of reaching God as existing.⁸

But Kant never examined the conditions demanded for the possibility of the tendency itself. Now, the existence of the Ideal is one of these conditions. Indeed, a tendency specified by the pure form of being cannot be moved by its own specification which is undetermined. Such a tendency can be moved only by its Ideal, which as such is necessarily determined and individual (as Kant admits). Now, to move the tendency, the Ideal must exist some way or other. But the Ideal does not exist in the specification of the tendency, which is undetermined; nor would it be enough for the Ideal to exist implicitly in the object of the tendency—the object of knowledge—because the tendency is presupposed for its formation. Hence, the Ideal can only, and necessarily must, exist in itself: the affirmation of God as Ideal is, therefore, really the affirmation of God as existing.⁹

We may explain this, perhaps more easily, another way. From the fact of the tendency we know that the object can be known and affirmed only in so far as it participates in the Ideal, that is, it can be known only by being referred to the Ideal of the tendency. But the object of

consciousness is necessarily known and affirmed as existing, at least as the object of consciousness. Thus in the affirmation of the object of consciousness as existing is implied its affirmation as existing by participation, and hence, the existence of the Ideal in which it participates.

This gives us, then, the existence of God, the principle of causality in its metaphysical form, the internal analogy of being, the finality of things, and the order of the universe, as metaphysical values implied in any act of knowledge.

Hence, we conclude that the affirmation of the existence of God is implied in any act of knowledge and is necessarily constitutive of the object of consciousness. Therefore, it has the same certitude as that object itself. You cannot deny the existence of God without at the same time denying the value of the very same act by which you deny God. God or complete scepticism! The traditional arguments for the existence of God will not give us more than this. It only remains to prove that they give it. But now we can be very brief.

Kant's criticisms of the ontological argument we admit. From ideal existence (the idea of existence), you cannot conclude to actual existence; you need something more than the idea of God to come to the existence of God. Yet, it will be useful to make our position somewhat clearer, as this point will come up again in the other arguments. From our preceding deduction it follows that, in any object of consciousness, I can distinguish a value of representation and a value of signification. By the value of representation (representative value) I mean the notional content of the object of consciousness, the concept as concept; by the value of signification (significative value) I mean all the conditions of possibility which the object implies and "signifies." The representative value is purely logical; from it I cannot conclude to actual existence; but the significative value (the concept as conceived) is ontological; from it I can conclude to actual existence, for I am on the plane of actual existence, as has been proved in our deduction.

If, now, the cosmological and teleological arguments are based on the *representative* value of the concepts involved, Kant is right; for then they are but the ontological argument "in another garb." If, on the other hand, they are based on the *significative* value of these concepts, they have a metaphysical value and the conclusion is reached in the plane of actual existence.

The cosmological argument may be stated thus: All empirical existence implies a Necessary Being; but this Necessary Being is the *Ens Realissimum*, God; therefore, all empirical existence implies the *Ens Realissimum*.

Now, since I have no intuition of an empirical existence, I must reason from my concept of an empirical object. If I reason from the representative value of this concept, I cannot escape Kant's criticism; for this representative value gives me only elements which have no meaning outside

space and time, and which stand on the logical plane. I cannot conclude to *Ens Necessarium* as having a metaphysical value; it can only be a law of unification in the experimental and logical plane—these were the conclusions of Kant. But, if I reason from the significative value, it follows that any object of experience is necessarily known as being by participation, as contingent in being. Then I rightly conclude to an *Ens Necessarium* in the same plane of reality. Besides, I hardly have to conclude, for the *Ens Necessarium* is given to me simultaneously with the knowledge of the contingency of the object. The major, therefore, stands. And so does the minor; for, reasoning from the significative value of the object, my knowledge of it, I reach the *Ens Necessarium*, as the Ideal of my knowing faculty, which is the same as the *Ens Realissimum*, the *Actus Purus*, God. But again, if in the minor I reason from the representative value, my concept of *Ens Necessarium*, I fall back into the ontological argument.

In brief, the three affirmations, namely, of the metaphysical contingency of the object, of the principle of causality, and of the existence of the Cause as self-sufficient in the line of being as well as in that of causality, are simultaneously implied in and equally constitutive of the object of consciousness.

In the teleological argument I conclude from the order in nature to finality, and from finality to an Intelligent Cause which I identify with the *Ens Realissimum*. If we reason from any concept of order or finality we again cannot escape Kant's criticisms. This has been sufficiently proved. But we have that finality as a metaphysical value; the finality of our knowing faculty is implied and signified in any act of knowledge. Hence, we can certainly reason from the finality of our mind, as we have done in our deduction. This is, no doubt, the easiest form of the argument.

But can I not take the argument as it stands, and reason from finality in things? Let us see. From order in things, I must conclude to finality, and to such a finality as implies a directive intelligence. But how do I know this order in things? My immediate knowledge of it is quite experimental. I can know experimentally some order in the eye, for instance, and some kind of finality, that the eye sees. Then I reason: this does not happen by sheer luck or hazard. It is intended. But how can I know that it did not happen by mere hazard? By the calculus of probability? By common sense? Yes, "*est valde suavis*," but all this does not give me any metaphysical certitude. To put the argument in its metaphysical form, I must reason from the inner nature of things. But this implies the whole of metaphysics; I must have constructed finite beings and the whole universe according to the laws of my own knowledge, as *actus existentis in potentia prout hujusmodi*, as movement. Then I have metaphysical

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The Quest for Happiness

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ALL men are searching for happiness; but today this world seems to be a mighty poor prospecting ground. Future generations will find in the literary fragments of the last decade which manage to survive our spent civilization a doleful echo of the lament uttered by the world's shrewdest observer: "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity." And yet, until a comparatively short time ago, all over the western world men and women were fairly happy. Their philosophy of life gave a satisfactory answer to those questions around which the riddle of life revolves, and upon whose solution man's happiness depends: Man is godly in origin, godly in destiny, and if his life be godly he may enjoy relative happiness in time, and, after death, be rewarded with happiness ineffable and eternal.

That unanimity is gone. A new philosophy of life, the seed of which was sown in the religious revolt of the sixteenth century, has captured the mind of the masses. The Reformers believed in Christ, but rejected the Church; deists revered God but repudiated Christ; rationalists tolerated God but forbade His interference with nature's laws and relegated Him to an extra-mundane heaven, from which materialists have driven Him into the shadows of mythology. New discoveries in the world of matter kept turning the minds of men from the study of nature's God to intensive research into nature's laws, until men grew matter-minded—no longer able to find the Creator because of the glory of His creatures; and the philosophy of life of the "modern mind"—so its adherents style it—became the antithesis of Christianity: There is no God but Science, and the Scientist is his prophet; the true gospel is evolution; no law is divine save the law of nature.

Initially, the scientist was the humblest of men; he was dealing with mysterious, mighty forces, and he knew it. Before him lay a vast, uncharted wonder-world. Step by step, hesitant, awed, he entered in; checking fact against fact, phenomenon against phenomenon; claiming rather too little than too much; formulating theories hopefully, but never dogmatically; stating laws that were acceptable today, but might have to be discarded tomorrow; pressing on with enthusiasm, but always sanely sure. Then, overnight the world went science-mad.

Many of us can remember when science was the Cinderella of the college curriculum. It seems but yesterday that she stepped from her hall room, third floor back, and took over the educational menage. Soon, laboratories overflowed the campus, faculties grew mushroom-wise and enrollment mounted like a skyrocket. She wedded herself to big business and begot offspring in mass production. There is scarcely a phase of life she did not touch, and by her touch improve.

One fatal mistake she made: she surrounded man with

luxury and poured into his mind wealth of knowledge; but she robbed him of wisdom. Unfortunately, many of her savants had little of the humble-mindedness of the scientists of an earlier day. Perhaps it was only natural; for Aladdin's lamp had never produced wonders so sudden, so potent, so glamorous as those they saw spring into being day by day. At any rate, with all the arrogance of a *nouveau riche* they swept aside the olden reverences. They were not content to be eminent geologists or physicists or chemists or biologists—they must become philosophers. The scientific method was their fetish and the yardstick by which they measured and discarded age-old verities. Higher criticism turned its searchlight on sacred scripture, fashioned a straw-god, scientifically dubbed "anthropomorphic," and burned it in effigy. Geology and astronomy seemed to clash with the cosmogony of Moses; so the doctrine of creation was tossed into the scrapheap and natural evolution became the religion of science. Men searched the firmament with high-powered lenses, graphed the orbit of the stars and clocked their speed, pushed the limits of stellar space beyond the reach of imagination; and finding no trace of "the hid battlements of eternity," they robbed mankind of the hope of a future heaven and promised him paradise here.

Man himself became but the most perfect expression of progressive evolution from the primordial ooze; the latest thrust of the world's upward striving toward ultimate perfection. He was boiled in a crucible, weighed, and found wanting. No microscope could detect a trace of an immaterial element in him. He was tagged according to the specific bent of the various sciences; but upon one thing they all agreed: Man is kin to the clod; blood brother to the beast. He has no spiritual soul.

Then "science" took apart man's thought processes, and a new psychology became epidemic. Universities hummed with it; printing presses poured it out as from a pipe hose; flaming youth punctuated its gin-gurgling with it; women's clubs gasped at it, stayed with it, and got shock-proof; and pouty wives sought surcease from ennui in being psychoanalyzed. Psychologists began to play the game without the hindrance of rules. They overworked intelligence to reason away the need of intelligence. They speciously argued against the use of logic. Repudiating dogma, they proceeded to dogmatize beyond the dreams of infallibility. Naively they demanded—and freely used—the right to contradict themselves. And the last stage of a quarter of a century of psychological debauch was the delirium of behaviorism, which robbed mankind of the last vestige of human dignity, when J. B. Watson "knocked free will into a cocked hat." Thus, within half a century the scientific method had rung out the old

philosophy of life and ushered in the new. Man, once the masterpiece of infinite Wisdom, became the offspring of the ape; his soul, once a fragment of divinity, became the latest refinement of embryonic forces; the mind, that had made him a little less than the angels, became an instinct, a little less than the brute's; the free will, which even Omnipotence respected, became a blind puppet in a maelstrom of sensation; and because he is of the earth earthy, it is folly for him to dream of eternal felicity. He must seek his happiness in time. And the exponents of the "modern" mind offered mankind as something new the age-old rule for happiness which has been tried and found wanting all down the centuries, whenever materialism gained ascendancy: "Let us eat, drink and be merry; for tomorrow we die."

Mankind became drunk with its new "freedom," and in the high ways of life and the lowly it plunged from one orgy to another. Self-expression was the shibboleth of the hour and the password to condone any extravagance in all the avenues of art and living. Freedom from the sane restraint of their forefathers, like heady wine, addled men's wits; prodigal-wise they fled their Father's house and lived riotously.

Rarely has any philosophy been subjected to more scathing irony by contemporary critics than popular materialism during the last decade. In *The Bookman* for March, nineteen hundred and thirty, Paul Elmer More thus summarized the invectives of the Humanists: "The noise and the whirl increase, the disillusion and depression deepen, the nightmare of futility stalks. Futility is the final word: the literature and art most characteristic of the day are criticized as chaotic, joyless, devoid of beauty, comfortless, fretfully original or feebly conventional, impotent, futile." And in his book, *On the Meaning of Life*, whose sub-title might well be "A Symposium of Despair," Will Durant gives us this dismal motif: "Life has become in that total perspective which is philosophy a fitful pullulation of human insects on the earth, a planetary eczema that may soon be cured; nothing is certain in it except death in a sleep from which there is no awakening." And to make the debacle of materialism more complete, science with all her real domination of natural forces has overreached herself. She whom man worshipped as a beneficent goddess has become a Frankenstein. She has swept him from the lap of luxury and placed him on a park bench; because her hands are too paralyzed to hold her horn of plenty, she has forced him into the bread line.

It is but another instance of history repeating itself. The millenium of the materialist always turns out a slough of despond; and it is interesting to watch the tragically ludicrous efforts made to extricate man from the morass into which the folly of the "modern mind" has plunged him. Walter Lippman and the Humanists see no inconsistency between inexorable progressive evo-

lution and backtracking some two dozen centuries to recapture the dispassionateness of Confucius or the decorum and poise of the Greek ideal; nor in preaching a gospel of happiness only to the "enfranchised," notwithstanding the fact that *all* men want to be happy, whether they eat with their fingers or know their forks; plod in an oxcart or soar in an aeroplane; fight with blow guns or poisoned gases; send message by tom-tom or radiogram.

Eugenists, ignoring the failure of law to curb man's appetite for drink, would now regulate man's sex impulses in the hope that from a government stud-farm happiness may emerge for human thoroughbreds in the future. But eugenists cannot be expected to realize that man's happiness rests upon something above and essentially independent of his animal impulses. Dyed-in-the-wool materialists, with Bertrand Russell, seem to tell us that the quest for happiness is vain; that "only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair can the soul's habitation henceforth be built." Science gives the lie to that sonorous nonsense. For science proves that nature never does anything in vain. Nature has given man eyes to see because of the rosy dawn and the glory of sunset and all the farflung loveliness of earth and sea and sky. Nature has given man ears to hear the exquisite symphonies pulsing through creation. Nature provides sunshine and air and moisture that the bush may beget its rose and the tree be heavy with fruit. There is no force in any creature that does not work infallibly toward a definite end; there is no organ in any living being that has not a specific function. Nature has given to no creature an instinct, an impulse, an urge for which she has not provided the possibility of satisfaction. It is pure scientific heresy to claim that nature has given to man an imperious, boundless craving for happiness only to mock him by denying that craving fruition.

The curse of materialism lies in this, that its adherents are so thrown out of focus by the scientific method as to seem incapable of thought except in matters that they can see or hear or handle. They have blinded themselves to all spiritual perception. Not the least of their inconsistencies is that in this most vital of human problems they forswear their own pragmatic test. If they could only quit theorizing and look about them they would find millions of men and women in every walk of life, of every grade of culture, who are happy in spite of the handicaps of environment, in spite of struggle with inimical forces outside them or with rebellious passions within; because they still cling to the traditional philosophy of life which alone understands the true dignity of man: godly in origin, godly in destiny, whose boundless yearning for happiness only the Infinite can satisfy; with a soul not "doomed to extinction in the vast death of the solar system," but destined to live on after "the whole temple of man's achievement shall be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins."

The Modern Mind

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THE ways in which the phrase "modern mind" is used today are sometimes not only inconsistent, but are liable to beget misapprehensions for the most part unfounded on fact. In Scholastic circles the modern mind is a kind of *bête noir*, an ogre, a Leviathan more formidable than the one conceived by Hobbes. It is portrayed as being antipodally opposed to the mind or spirit of Scholastic philosophy, utterly subversive of the true concept of reality, completely at fault in the method of attaining it, and totally irrational in the conclusions at which it arrives. Paradoxically, the same authors are seen in asserting that the spirit of Scholasticism is not outworn or antiquated, and that St. Thomas is the very best of the moderns. No philosophical system, it is maintained, is better adapted to explain the problems of our day than that which was formulated some seven centuries ago. And that a Schoolman may be modern and orthodox is evident from the very name of this journal. It seems, therefore, that the term "modern" must have at least two meanings.

Philological disquisitions in philosophy are usually of little worth, but if a short one may be permitted for the sake of clarity (not of proof), it may be noted that even etymology sees two meanings in the word "modern." Some would derive it from the Latin *modo*, meaning "just now," while others trace the parentage of its present significance—in direct line—no further than the French *moderne*, which is supposed to mean whatever is *à la mode*, or what is generally in vogue, or what is characteristic of the average individual. One derivation manifestly stresses universality of diffusion and acceptance; the other emphasizes the chronological element, that, namely, which has occurred very recently or only a moment ago.

This distinction might well be adverted to when the modern mind is spoken of; for there is a modern mind in both these senses. One is the general outlook upon life of the average individual. Though perhaps not strictly definable, its manifestations in morals, in education, in political and social institutions and in religion have admitted some attempts at analysis and description: thus it is said to be materialistic, mechanistic, scientific (or pseudo-scientific), and atheistic. Now, although we may want that this mind is modern insofar as it is a way of looking at things which is almost universal, we ought to note that this is not the modern mind in the sense that it is the product of very recent thought. This outlook is rather the effect of the mind of past centuries. It is the nineteenth (and perhaps the late eighteenth) century's mind carried out into practice and objectified in

visible and tangible form. It has been apotheosized in the garish exposition masquerading under the title of a Century of Progress.

Philosophers—at least truly great philosophers—are not the children of their age; they are rather the fathers of new ages, new cultures, new outlooks. Though they may be influenced by their *milieu* and breathe its air, the very names of Voltaire, Rousseau, Calvin and Luther (or, conversely, Francis of Assisi or Ignatius) are sufficient to show that the ideas of one age are the mould of the next. Ideas are the seeds which grow into cockle or into wheat; and if the pen is mightier than the sword, it is so only because it perpetuates a vital and fertile idea. Thus, in the past two centuries, Hegel cultivated the seed which has been sown in Russia and Mexico and Spain. Darwin planted the seed which has spread into all fields of thought. Kant was the unwitting gardener of a new agnosticism, and Hæckel proffered arguments why materialism should occupy a central place in the garden of philosophy. Consequently, when we speak of the modern mind in this sense, we should remember that this mind, whose pollen is so universally diffused, is not a product of recent thought, but the full-blown cockle grown from seed of a bygone day.

What then of the modern mind in the sense of a mind which has been only recently (and is now) expressing itself? It is indubitable that there are modern philosophers who have found in the nineteenth century's systems of rigor and despair only the ashes of disillusionment, who feel that the thought which defies material progress is subjecting man to the condition of a thrall, and who are zealously eager to preach a gospel more worthy of the dignity of man. This mind—we fully realize it is still in the idea stage and that it has yet to become incarnate—despite its shortcomings, (for we readily concede it is not without metaphysical sin), gives promise and affords hope that in time its diffusion into practical affairs and its general acceptance into the outlook of the man in the street will guarantee a far more happy future, and one which, from the Scholastic viewpoint, will be far more reasonable.

In its method, in its concept of reality, and in some of its conclusions this recent thought exhibits glaring contrasts with that which has preceded it. Unlike the mind of the nineteenth century, which did not disdain the most arrant dogmatism, the present modern mind is, if we may so call it, humble. Truth, it holds, cannot be fully attained: only dimly and darkly as through a glass may some of its outlines be traced. Truth, it maintains, is modest, and cloaks itself in unrevealing robes; and the

philosopher should accept this fact. His quest therefore should not be for Truth, nor his aim complete and apodictic certitude. His dignity will consist in his struggle to approach nearer and nearer to Truth. Not the possession, but the pursuit of truth; not the prize, but the running of the race is the business of the athlete of philosophy; for as Lessing would say: "the chase is better than the prey."

This attitude of "humility" is born of a philosophical method. Formerly, the philosopher, depending solely on his reason, could spin wondrous spider-webs of metaphysics, with utter disregard for fact; high indeed were the ascents he made into the rare regions in his balloon-like system—filled with gas. Now, however, there seems to be an end to such vaporizing. The cycle has turned from pure reason to empiricism and factual knowledge. The new modern mind commends, with Bacon, not wings to the soul, but lead. Metaphysics can go no further than experience, whether this experience be sensitive, or intuitive, or aesthetic, or sentimental. The facile hypothesis or the easy theory without facts is futile. But a fact no one can gainsay. "*Quelqu'un a vu, quelqu'un a touché, quelqu'un sait*"—such is the metaphysical norm of knowledge for perhaps the greatest of the moderns. True, the intellect is shorn of its power, for it can never reach the transcendent or noumenal, since only the phenomenal is the object of experience. Hence, analytic reasoning is taboo: about what is not experienced the philosopher must maintain a discreet silence. Such is the *ἐποχή* of Husserl, such the "*on s'abstient d'affirmer*" of Bergson.

This method of phenomenology or empiricism has given rise to a new concept of reality: and here again the new thought has overturned the conceptions of the last century. Then, materialism and determinism were axiomatic; now, materialism is dead (we reiterate, we speak only of some of the more recent philosophers and philosophical scientists) or if not dead, it is, like Philip of Macedon, pretty sick. The *Zeitgeist*, if we may so turn the word, is a time of the spirit. Instead of a mechanistic and rigorously static interpretation of nature, everything is now looked upon as dynamic, creative, forever changing, forever rising to further heights. No longer is necessity cried from the housetops nor emphasis put on the natural physical laws; in their place we are told of the capricious interplay of electrons, the sporadic and spasmodic shooting forth of radiant particles of energy, and that matter itself is nothing else but creative force. This perpetually active and perpetually changing reality is a *nisus ad meliora*. Both quantitatively (witness the theory of the expanding universe) and qualitatively the world is becoming bigger and better. So too in biology is mechanism on the wane and vitalism in the ascendent; and this for a peculiar reason.

The reason is that recent thought, far from being

godless as it was in the preceding century, is "*gottbetrunken*." Ever since James' classic appeared, deep interest has been shown in the phenomena of religious experience. Mysticism and spiritualism (both amenable to experimental observation) have been studied with scientific methods, and fact after fact has been gathered so that now even the philosopher who restricts himself to experience can maintain he has

"... a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

Restricted to empirical phenomena as it is, this modern mind has been unable to deny the fact that some "transphysical" causality is at work in the phenomena of mysticism and spiritualism. There is a God, and He is immanent: hence the influence of the theory of religion on the concept of reality. If God is so thoroughly immanent, His presence is to be felt in every manifestation of being. Since He is ever present and continually active ("a God who *does nothing is nothing*"), all reality must be realizing itself, creating itself, perfecting itself with every new form or emergent or *nouveauté* which is born. Perfection is development, creation, evolution, emergence, not something perfected, developed, created, evolved or emerged. God himself must submit to the process of dynamic perfection; He is a continual *nisus* toward what is better or more perfect. And only this for the method of empiricism can know nothing of a transcendent God endowed with an actual infinity of actually infinite perfections.

Thus, recent thought has found the God of immanence and of nature, but not the God of transcendence, of grace, of super-nature. Since God can be accounted for in the phenomenal order, there is no need for a God that is supernatural. Mysticism, spiritualism, and even miracles are all a part of nature. Every happening in this world of ours, every stage of evolution, every mystic (and all of his experiences) is but part of a simple act of Divine Energy. Reality is thus unified in process, and the method of knowing it is unified in experience, whether this experience be a kind of empiric intuition or, as Whitehead would have it, an empiric satisfaction. The philosophy of "Holism" has, then, a logical place. "*A un dieu, qui regarderait d'en haut, le tout paraîtrait indivisible comme la confiance des fleurs qui s'ouvrent au printemps.*"

From this concept of reality, recent thought draws many conclusions. A proof for immortality is seen in the phenomena of spiritualism. Again, this modern mind is not only modern but "modernistic" in stressing the subjective element in religion; but it is a logical sequence from the emphasis on the immanence of God. Progress is still a

catchword, but in contrast with the material progress achieved in the nineteenth century, this new outlook stresses spiritual progress. Now is the time of the "value" philosophies. Humanism, for instance, is athirst for a better term. The Baconian "knowledge is power" and the pragmatic "works without faith" have been discarded; for the modern mind, with its intimations of immortality and "experience" of God, realizes that there are objective terms of value. And while it still is astigmatic, it can nevertheless discern that these values must be spiritual. Again we say the *Zeitgeist* is a time of the spiritual.

The modern mind as here summarily sketched is not really bad; hardly any philosophy is. Its chief defect, doubt, is its denial of the right of the intellect to reason analytically and its exclusive trust in experimental knowledge. But in spite of this there is cause for rejoicing: empiricism, based on the rock of certain fact, though hesitant, is infinitely better than empty transcendental theory. Philosophic "humility," though perhaps exposed to agnosticism, is much to be preferred to doctrinaire pronouncements. Better than rigorous determinism and fatalistic necessity is the admission that nature is essentially contingent. In passing, we may add that this dynamic content of reality is not far from, if not identical with, the Scholastic doctrine of *act* or *ἐνέργεια*. Too frequently the Scholastic is accused of harboring some inert substratum called a substance; but we believe that no doctrine is more in accord with modern theories of matter than that of the modern Schoolman. The trend toward these philosophies presages a return to common sense; and while some of the values proposed have been relative and approximate, they are certainly better than the futility and disillusionment of past systems. A modicum of enlightenment and the gentlest of shoves may well advance the modern mind to a better knowledge of and a closer approximation to the supreme values of The Good, The True and The Beautiful.

Nor must the Scholastic be too quick to censure the modern mind or dismiss it with a supercilious shrug because of its doctrine of immanentism, tinged though it be with pantheism. The fool may say in his heart there is no God; but even great metaphysicians, overwhelmed by the vision of the necessity of a necessary and infinite being, yet unenlightened by Faith, have been hesitant in affirming the separate existence of an infinitesimal creature. The problem of the One and the Many is still alive. The Scholastic has his solution—the correct one—but is it not true that for apologetic reasons and to avoid the taint of pantheism, he has stressed the transcendence of God and slighted His immanence? That God concurs in the *esse* and *agere* of the creature is commonplace; but has the Scholastic doctrine fully developed the *how* except in theory? Scholasticism is not a closed system, as some would have us believe, nor is it a deposit of all truth. Frequently the modern Schoolman has been charged with

being a *laudator temporis acti*; but the charge is false. Any new truth can readily be synthesized in his system with no compromise of principles. His motto is "*vetera novis augere*," and rightly so, as Newman has proved in his *Development of Christian Doctrine*. That the modern mind may supply the modern Schoolman with new truths or at least new ways of proving old truths is not unthinkable. So, let him not say of it as Montaigne did: "I have little patience with what is new under whatever form it may occur."

KANT'S EPISTEMOLOGY (Cont.)

the two thoughts, therefore, is objective. This means that objects measure thought, and not the other way about. Deny, if you will, that thought is objective; then your denial is shouldered aside by what you meant to deny, shouldered aside, that is, by the truth, thought is objective. Otherwise your denial is meaningless. *Naturam expellas furca tamen usque recurret*.

Two remarks complete this indirect proof of the objectivity of thought. The first is Aristotle's answer to the Sophists who deny the very possibility of thought: "You act," he retorts, "and action supposes an affirmation that the object of your action is good. Whether you like it or not, then, you must affirm, since you must act." The second remark is this: The truth of the objectivity of thought, which was shown in the preceding paragraph, is enough to cut the ground from beneath Kantian agnosticism. Whether or no the objectivity of God or the *ego* can be proved (it can be, but that is not the question here), we have in this minimal expression of the truth of thought—that is, in the expression, thought is objective—the truth which makes possible any objective thought at all. My judgments, reasonings, inferences, may be wrong, but then they can be right. Whether they be wrong or right depends on the possibility of thinking at all; and that is a possibility only if thought be objective.

It is the content of the second remark which we may use to meet Kantian philosophy on its own terms,⁴ if one cares to do this. Kant was concerned with indicating and demonstrating the *a priori* conditions which make possible the knowledge of objects of experience and thought. His investigation did not start from a metaphysical critique of the objects of knowledge. But Aristotle had done this; and he and his followers had by a single jump (in the *πρώτη φιλοσοφία*) landed themselves into the position of admitting objective thought. After a few preliminary passages at arms with the Sophists, Aristotle left them with their heads cut off, though, alas, the Sophists did not even know this until they tried to move their heads. He was content to leave them to the discovery that they could not move their detached heads; less figuratively, that they could not act, and act they must, if they persisted in denying that they knew; for action presupposes the affirmation of something worth acting for.

But Kant's way is more tortuous. He begins with the analysis of the content of knowledge; then he deduces the *a priori* conditions which make possible the surplusage of this content in knowledge over experience. This is a fair, though difficult method. Only, Kant should have followed it to the bitter end. Had he done so he would have discovered what his timid agnosticism veiled to his eyes, that among the conditions of the possibility of knowledge is precisely this one: thought is objective. The indirect demonstration of the presence of this condition, which Aristotle and the Scholastics supply, is the very transcendental deduction which Kant sought; for Kant had set out in search of the reason why we think at all—not the psychological, but the logical reason. This reason the best Greek philosophy had long ago indicated: we can think only because thought is objective; for, if it is not objective, then, at least that last truth is objective. Thus, objectivity of thought is the condition of its possibility. You cannot stick the finger of experience into reality without having it gripped by the principle of identity, or its negative expression, the principle of contradiction; and once this principle has gripped experience, your thinking, caught as it is by the main cog of the principle of identity, is geared into the vast, ineluctable machinery of the laws of being. Experience is, indeed, of *this* or *that* thing; but if of *this*, then not of *that*, and thus we straightway are possessed of necessary, objective thought. Experience is not, as experience, invested with universality and necessity. Truly, I may sit or stand, see this or see that; but experience reveals to one imbedded in it that *if* he sits, it is true that he sits and does not stand. In short, objectivity of thought upholds, like Atlas, the whole world of mind, even errors, doubts and negations. Not to admit this, to deny that thought is objective, and still maintain the truth of that denial, is like trying to kill oneself in order to live. More, one could not do this even if one tried, for from the ashes of denial comes once more, phoenix-like, truth.

The two acute antinomies, the two acute phases of the epistemological problem of the one and the many (in experience, and in thought) being thus solved, intellection receives its complement of explanation in the Graeco-Scholastic theories of the active intellect and the analogy of being. But once in possession of the fundamental synthesis of being in both experience and thought, the Scholastic system has got its start; and from then on it has only to step carefully over the debris of matter to the ultimate ground of all unity, Pure Act.

REFERENCES

¹ Cf. Valensin, A., *A travers la métaphysique*, pp. 145 ff. The present essay, when not indeed a paraphrase of some portions of this work, is inspired by the remarkably penetrating article it contains on Kant.

² *Meta.*, 1009 a-b.

³ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 85, a. 2, c.

⁴ Cf. Maréchal, J., *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, Cahier vi, *passim*.

GOD-KANT'S OBJECTIONS (Cont.)

finality; "*omnia tendunt assimilari Deo.*" But then I have God as *Finis*, not yet as Intelligent Cause. To come to this I still need the cosmological argument, for otherwise as Kant has it, I can only conclude to a "Supreme Architect." But, since the cosmological argument stands, the teleological argument will stand also.¹⁰

Our arguments for the existence of God stand and prove metaphysically (except the ontological argument of course, which is not ours). Yet, had we nothing to sacrifice to Kant's *Critique*? Nothing real, nothing truly metaphysical. But we have to admit that all our arguments, in whatever way they be proposed, are finally based on and necessarily imply the one fundamental argument, that is, *the necessary affirmation of God as the Idea of the End and Perfection of the dynamism of our intellect, manifested in and constitutive of every act of knowledge* (affirmation). Hence, we are finally driven either to accept this affirmation of the existence of God as valid or to deny the validity of our most elementary act of knowledge, and thus to accept complete scepticism with its theoretical contradictions and practical impossibilities.

Is this subjectivism? Yes, if by its opposite, "objectivism," one means either ontologism or conceptualism. No, if one understands that the only objectivism within our reach is the identity of ourselves with ourselves manifested and expressed in our act of knowledge.

Kant thought he had exposed the insufficiency of metaphysics as a theoretical science. In fact, he did not reach metaphysics; he merely ignored it. Kant exposed the impossibility of ontologism, the inadequacy of pure empiricism, and the inanity of nominalism or notionalism. But in no point of his argument did he come into contact with true Scholastic metaphysics.

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¹ Here we should have to examine Kant's antinomies. But that would take us too long. Besides, the principle of the antinomies comes back in the proofs for the existence of God. It will be sufficient to note that Kant's antinomies are merely illustrative of the above-stated principles. For reasoning on concepts that may have both a phenomenal and a metaphysical meaning, one can prove either side of a question. Kant's solution of the antinomies consists in pointing out this flaw in the argumentation and in indicating that, if the premises are taken in their "supposed metaphysical meaning, the value of the conclusion is on a problematical.

² Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. by J. Meiklejohn, N. Y. Colonial Press, 1900; pp. 331 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 338-9.

⁴ Maréchal, J., *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, Cahier iii, *La critique de Kant*, Lessianum, Louvain, 1923; p. 20.

⁵ It should be noted that, according to Kant, these arguments or pseudo-postulates of theoretical reason, though not apodictical, are nevertheless extremely useful: first, in the regulative use: the moving springs of empirical science; then, to make us understand and appreciate the content and value of the postulate of practical reason, once this is established.

In other words, Kant's first error was to exclude some elements in his starting point, and his second error was to cling pertinaciously to his first.

In other words, our argument comes to this that you cannot divide "theoretical reason" from "practical reason" as Kant does. It is the position of St. Thomas: "*Voluntas in ratione est.*"

It must be noted that Idealistic Pantheism was avoided, not refuted, from the very starting point, where we admitted, with Kant, that sensitive receptivity was at the beginning of all our knowledge.

The case of the artist first conceiving his ideal and then real-

izing it is completely different. To him the ideal presents itself as concrete and determined (thanks to the imaginative faculty); the specification of the tendency is a concrete representation of the ideal. But in the case of the tendency of the intellect, the specification is by no means a "representation" of the Ideal. It is a "law of operation," an idea in the Kantian sense of the word, not in the Scholastic sense.

¹⁰ Thus taken in its integrity the argument is splendid; it is the summit of metaphysics, God as the *Alpha* and *Omega* of all things, the universe as coming from God and returning to God, to find in God its true perfection.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE HEAVENLY CITY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PHILOSOPHERS

By Carl L. Becker

Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1932, \$2.00

This book contains a series of lectures delivered in the School of Law at Yale University. The author's purpose is to show that "the underlying preconceptions of eighteenth century thought were still, allowance made for certain alterations in the bias, essentially the same as those of the thirteenth century." "Instinctively held" or "underlying" preconceptions of any age, he tells us, may be called "the climate of opinion" prevalent in that age. This medieval climate of opinion is the reason why we cannot understand St. Thomas today; we moderns live in a different atmosphere. The medieval climate "imposed upon Dante and St. Thomas a peculiar mode of the intelligence and a special type of logic." The "*philosophes*," on the other hand, "made a great point of having denounced the superstition and hocus-pocus of medieval Christian thought." Phrases such as these, produced as they are in the modern climate of opinion, prepare us for what is to come in the book.

The author states his intention of approaching the subject from the historical point of view. In this he succeeds—when he describes the teachings of the eighteenth century philosophers. When he treats of St. Thomas and the medieval philosophers from the historical point of view underestimates its mark. He is living in a climate of opinion that is not salubrious for St. Thomas; he is limited by the preconceptions of his own age. He cannot transport himself into St. Thomas' climate of opinion; he could not have a sympathy with the philosophy of the Angelic Doctor. Certain recurrent phrases similar to those mentioned above betray this lack of sympathy. They would seem to indicate that the historical method of inquiry is not always strictly followed in the course of the book.

The author contrasts the a priori hypotheses of the thirteenth century with the empirical formulae of the eighteenth; the restricted field of thought in the earlier period with the broad liberalism of the later. Now, first of all, to any truly philosophical mind that is not befogged by the modern climate of opinion the "hypotheses" of revealed truth are facts just as much as Galileo's law for falling bodies is a fact. If by "facts" we mean those in the physical world about us, it is true that the philosophers lived in a world greater than that of their predecessors—at least in factual content. The reason for this, every philosopher knows, was the lack of experimental facilities in the medieval world. In the second place, St. Thomas and his contemporaries had just as much freedom of thought in the eighteenth century or modern Christian philosopher. In the rest of the field of philosophy and much of theology, in the realm of physical science and in the useful arts, the philosopher

then, as now, was free to speculate and inquire. And yet, there is no place in philosophy for absolute free-thought. It would be as devastating in its results to society as absolute free-love. All thought must ever be constrained by fact, and by sober fact many a soaring theory has been brought to the ground. True philosophers of all ages are free; but they must recognize the fact of rightfully established revealed truth. This position is not intrinsically absurd; in fact it is the only position for every true philosopher, no matter in what climate of opinion he may happen to exist.

ROBERT J. WILLMES.

ST. AUGUSTINE

By Rebecca West

D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1933, \$2.00

"It is so easy," writes Father D'Arcy (*Dublin Review*, July, 1933, p. 130) "for a reviewer to take advantage of his position and act like a sergeant-major on parade that he is rarely justified in showing anger and abusing the writer. I am tempted, however, to make an exception on this occasion. . . ." My excuse for the tone of this review would be that Miss West's book, which purports to be a biographical study of a man who was a philosopher, a theologian, and a saint of the Catholic Church, manifests an abysmal ignorance of philosophy, theology, sanctity, and Catholicity, and can be excused only on the ground that stupidity and not malice produced this tragical comedy of history. This travesty of St. Augustine is rendered all the more barefaced by a three-page bibliography of good authorities; but if the writer ever opened these books it was only to find out what not to say about her subject. What her sources really were is an unfathomable mystery.

It would take the reviewer as many chapters as the book has pages to deal with all the misstatements and glaring falsehoods which Miss West airily gushes forth. Her St. Augustine is, in brief, a selfish, morbidly sex-conscious barbarian. He is possessed of an unjust and venomous hatred of his father; he is a stupid dupe of his crafty mother; he is ruthless in gratifying his lusts; he is thoroughly insincere or else too obtuse to know his own mind; he is blatantly quarrelsome—a beautiful portrait of a holy bishop and doctor! The more to his credit, of course, if he were converted from such a life, grossly exaggerated as it is; but Miss West seems to think that his conversion was little more than a flair for neo-Platonism, and that he merely found a new outlet for his *libido* in Plotinian ecstasies! "Augustine had the lightest possible sense of ethical responsibility, though the heaviest possible sense of sin,"—a subtle Freudian distinction which to ordinary common sense is merely silly. Where, we ask, did Miss West find such a caricature? She professes to have read the *Confessions*; but she warns us that the *Confessions* abound with errors and omissions, which she will at

long last set right—not by orthodox historical method, but by feminine intuition.

The injustice done Monica is even worse. Miss West discovers an Oedipus complex between mother and son; whence it arises that the calculating, heartless Monica leads her benighted son whither she will. His conversion was not to God, but to Monica; he abandoned a life of sin not because it was sin ("the lightest possible sense of ethical responsibility") but because Monica wanted him to marry an heiress; his later life is dominated not by the love of God, but by his prepossession with the memory of his mother. A more malignant perversion of the love between Christian mother and son was never put on paper.

Miss West disclaims any attempt to deal with the philosophy and theology of St. Augustine—"Shakespeare's life without the plays," says G. C. Heseltine (*G. K.'s Weekly*, Feb., 1933). Considering the utter incapacity manifested in the amateurish snatches which Miss West has allowed herself, we may regret that she did not adhere strictly to her original plan. We learn, much to our surprise, that St. Augustine invented the doctrine of predestination and that he is the direct progenitor of Calvinism. Her efforts at Manichaeism, neo-Platonism, and the *De Civitate Dei* (sagaciously characterized as "though a work of genius, yet a shocking and barbarous book"!) are too inept for comment. We may pass over her grotesque remarks on the early Christian Church, apparently lifted from works long since delivered to the rubbish heap by intelligent people.

What, we may ask, is at the bottom of this work of marvelous misunderstanding? Two things: first, "If we examine ourselves," says Miss West, "we cannot claim to have free will"; secondly, not so explicitly stated, Miss West recognizes absolutely no influence of God and the supernatural on St. Augustine. The false philosophy of the will forces her to seek explanations of all phenomena in Augustine's life by psychological determinations. This calls for some remarkable spurts of the creative imagination—and Miss West rises admirably to the occasions. The second ignores the most powerful motive in the character of Augustine; leave it out, and his life is "to the Gentiles foolishness."

This book does not deserve anger, and would be ridiculous were it not that thousands, perhaps, will soak up this hodgepodge of wild fancies and cheap wit as history.

JOHN L. MCKENZIE.

THE LOGIC OF SCIENCE

By W. G. Ballantine

Crowell, 1933, \$2.00

This stimulating little volume, originally published in 1930 as *The Basis of Belief*, has for its purpose "a clear exposition of the few simple but profound principles that lie at the basis of all scientific reasoning." Consistent with this purpose the author is chiefly concerned with an analysis of two fundamentals in the scientific method: induction and the question of causation. Early chapters deal with the first steps in the inductive process, such as the accumulation, observation and disposition of facts. There follows a discussion of various phases of induction: primary and secondary, complete and incomplete, etc. The next few chapters on facts of resemblance, coexistence, causation and succession clear the way for the most important chapter of the book: Canons for Isolating Facts of Causation. The author concludes with a brief treatment of the use of Hypothesis and Analogy, the value of authority and some of the more common fallacies in scientific reasoning. His final chapter on Proof is, perhaps, the best in the book, and were all scientific investigators familiar with its contents, there would be fewer embarrassments consequent upon the exposure of inaccuracy in observation and inconsistency in reasoning.

From what has been said it will be seen that this book is just such healthy mental pabulum as the intellectual world

stands in need of today. The anomalous doctrine of the Sceptic who asserts dogmatically that he doesn't know what he is talking about, as well as the ambiguous doctrine of the Pragmatist who identifies truth with utility but is unable to define either term, are ably discussed and convincingly refuted in Dr. Ballantine's little book. It is the position of John Stuart Mill, however, on the questions of causation and induction that is most frequently assailed. For a good many years now Mill has been considered the logician's *beau ideal*, but Dr. Ballantine is as little awed by the authority of a great name as he is deceived by the speciosity of a weak argument. And that many of Mill's arguments are woefully weak is abundantly shown in *The Logic of Science*. As Dr. Ballantine points out, to reject (as Mill rejected) the validity of induction *per enumerationem simplicem* is to subvert every law of nature, and to speak (as Mill spoke) of cause without defining carefully what one means by the word is to be guilty of fuzzy thinking and confused writing.

It must be confessed, however, that Dr. Ballantine himself is not always completely successful in his treatment of the difficult subject of causation. His failure to make use of such succinct expressions as *causa libera* and *causa necessaria*, *causa totalis* and *causa partialis* necessitates circuitous explanations of these concepts which are not always clear. Then, too, he speaks of *historical* causation by which he understands the occurrence of an event that "opens the door for" a subsequent event. This prior event is rather a condition than a cause, and Dr. Ballantine's "opens the door for" is simply the Scholastics' "*removens prohibens*." A cause is defined as a principle which *by its influx brings* into existence a thing of itself insufficient to exist. That the antecedent circumstance which Dr. Ballantine calls an *historical* cause has not this essential influx can be seen from the example which he proposes as an instance of historical causation. "If some one opens the gate, the dog may run out and bite the teasing boy. The opening of the gate *does not in any way affect* the boy. The dog is the efficient cause of the bite" (*Italics mine*). This point must be emphasized; the opening of the gate is a condition of the dog's biting the boy. It is not the cause of it.

There are other inaccuracies which may be briefly mentioned, such as confusion of logical and ontological truth, rejection of all analytical principles as majors in syllogistic reasoning and the old objection that no syllogism can add to our knowledge since the conclusion is necessarily contained in the premises. There are, besides, not a few statements in the book which, in the absence of satisfactory explanation, must be considered misleading, at the very least. For instance: "We cannot know God either by reason or faith" (p. 13); "In the world of realities nothing is necessarily true" (p. 37); "There is no possibility of disobedience (in the laws of nature) because there is no command from above and no variation in conduct below" (p. 120); "Excess of population may cause poverty and poverty, by deteriorating the habits of the poor, may stimulate population" (p. 214). Dr. Ballantine also approves the well-known and often refuted argument of Hume that, in the case of miracles, the certitude which we have from moral necessity must yield to the higher certitude which we have from physical necessity. As every student of Scholastic logic knows, the argument is built upon the false supposition that moral certitude is all that we have from the testimony of witnesses. Given the necessary conditions this certitude is reductively metaphysical. Secondly, we have physical certitude that the given event could not be produced by the *unaided forces of nature*. Our moral certitude does not contravene this physical certitude, but rather presupposes it. Lastly, in the case of the immediate witnesses moral certitude has no place at all.

Despite such occasional lapses, however, the book is eminently worth while. It is honest, definite, constructive and palatable. The philosopher, as well as the scientist, will make no mistake adding it to his library.

WILLIAM LESAINT.

SYMBOLIC LOGIC

By Clarence Irving Lewis and Cooper Harold Langford

The Century Company, New York, 1932, \$5.00

Symbolic logic is different from traditional logic in method rather than in subject matter. It applies the symbols of mathematics to the expression of mental operations and manipulates these symbols in the same way as we manipulate equations in mathematics. Thus, it opens up an insight into the laws of thought and into their applications and relations far beyond the reach of the ordinary logic. At the same time it introduces an element which renders this approach of logic well-nigh impossible to all but the mathematically minded. By the use of algebraic symbols logic goes farther into the realm of the abstract than most men are able to appreciate. Hence, it is no fault of the authors if the ordinary reader finds it hard to understand their book.

This is the only book on symbolic logic in English which is comprehensive and intelligible to those who have had no previous training in either logic or mathematics. The first five chapters cover those topics which lend themselves most easily to elementary study; later chapters deal with various ramifications of the subject which will be of interest to those taking up advanced work in logic. We do not hesitate to recommend this book; but we recommend it with the warning that it will prove a work for hard study rather than cursory reading. Probably, as a text in the hands of a skillful teacher it would remove many of the difficulties which at present seem to stand in the way of a clear understanding of what symbolic logic is.

J. J. HORST.

